

Minutes

Community Preservation Committee

DATE: Wednesday August 15, 2007
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street (BEHIND City Hall)

Members Present: Jack Hornor, George Kohout, Tom Parent, John Andrulis, Chris Kennedy, Don Bianchi

Staff Present: Bruce Young

Jack Hornor opened the public meeting at 7:05 PM.

Public Comment:

Dave Herships of Warburton Way-stated that Northampton Community Preservation Act (CPA) accounts are accruing interest and asked if it is possible for the committee to publish reports on a monthly or quarterly basis. Dave stated that he would like to see detailed information on the types of accounts, disbursements, interest, etc.

Dave Herships of Warburton Way asked when the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) would begin accepting CPA funding proposals.

Jack Hornor explained to Dave Herships that the CPC is currently working on developing a needs assessment, which is required by law, and project evaluation criteria so that project proposals can be evaluated in a fair and expedient manner.

Minutes:

George Kohout moved to accept minutes for June 20, 2007 and July 18, 2007.

Chris Kennedy seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor.

Chair's Report/ Discussion of CPC staffing levels:

Jack Hornor reviewed the CPC staffing memo sent to the members of the CPC. Jack Hornor then stated that he believes that the CPC should record and publish detailed minutes and that the CPC should be completely open and transparent in all of their decisions. Jack Hornor then asked the other members for their opinions on keeping detailed minutes.

Chris Kennedy stated that the Community Preservation Committee is a unique committee that will be required to make recommendations on projects to be funded by public dollars. Chris Kennedy then stated that he agrees with Jack Hornor and that being completely transparent and providing the public with detailed minutes is worth the additional cost.

Chris Kennedy stated that he would be in favor of an administrative position for seven hours per month.

George Kohout stated that he believes funding another staff member to attend meetings is not necessary and the typical minutes taken by Office of Planning and Development staff for other boards (Planning Board) are acceptable. George also stated that he would vote to hire an administrative person if others believe it is necessary, but would like to review the decision after six months.

Don Bianchi stated that the amount of detail in the July minutes may not be necessary and he would vote for an administrative position for seven hours per month.

Tom Parent agreed with Don Bianchi.

John Andrulis stated that he is in favor of hiring for an administrative position for seven hours per week.

Jack Hornor stated that there might be some confusion in the number of hours and read the email from Wayne Feiden providing a couple of options for additional staffing of the CPC. Option A was for a bare bones administrative position providing the CPC with seven hours of service per month that would basically cover the work to produce the minutes of meetings and possibly some preparation for meetings. Option B was for an administrative position providing twenty-eight hours per month that would cover most or all of the anticipated administrative work for the CPC.

Jack Hornor asked Bruce Young to give a breakdown of what type of work professional staff would complete and what type of work an administrative assistant would complete.

Bruce Young stated that he was not advocating for the CPC to provide more or less administrative hours, but the fourteen hours per week that he works for the CPC is not enough to allow him to continue to provide the CPC with the level of detail and amount of transparency required to date.

Bruce Young stated that the anticipated CPA funding process will require numerous professional and administrative tasks, including but not limited to:

- Preparing and updating CPC plans and documents
- Receiving proposals
- Notification to proponents
- Review of proposals
- Web postings and public record filing/document scanning
- Public outreach
- Preparation of staff reports and monthly/quarterly reports
- Creating proposal presentations
- Preparation of agendas and other documents for CPC meetings
- Presentations to the Mayor/City Council
- Monitoring projects

George Kohout moved to support the compromise between Option A and Option B of hiring an administrative assistant for fourteen hours per month and that the position shall be reviewed after six months.

Don Bianchi seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor.

Discussion of Scope and Process of a Community Preservation Plan

Jack Hornor read the MGL 44B section stating that the CPC shall study the needs, possibilities and resources of the city or town regarding community preservation. The committee shall consult with existing municipal boards, including the conservation commission, the historical commission, the planning board, the board of park commissioners and the housing authority, or persons acting in those capacities or performing like duties, in conducting such studies. As part of its study, the committee shall hold one or more public informational hearings on the needs, possibilities and resources of the city or town regarding community preservation possibilities and resources, notice of which shall be posted publicly and published for each of two weeks preceding a hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town.

Jack Hornor stated that an interim needs assessment could be conducted and asked the CPC how much research is needed before the CPC begins accepting funding proposals.

Don Bianchi asked Jack Hornor to further explain the requirements of MGL 44B focusing on the section that requires the CPC to work with municipal boards.

Jack Hornor asked the CPC members if they would feel comfortable moving forward with a CPC Plan at the September meeting.

George Kohout stated that boards, committees and the public should have more input on a plan.

Don Bianchi stated that the draft plan could be evaluated by the CPC in September and then the draft could be sent out for other boards to review. Don Bianchi added that the CPC could vote on a final revision at the October meeting.

Jack Hornor asked if other boards and committees could review a plan between now and the September meeting.

Don Bianchi stated that August is a difficult month for volunteers and would rather send the plans to boards and committees after the September meeting.

Tom Parent asked if the CPC members would like to have an open workshop meeting in between the September meeting and the October meeting.

Jack Hornor stated that a draft plan could be completed for the meeting in September, boards could receive the draft in late September, a public meeting could be held on

Wednesday, October 03, 2007 and the CPC could vote on a final revision at the meeting on October 17, 2007.

George Kohout stated that supports the plan, but he is unavailable on October 3rd.

George Kohout stated that the goals in the CPC Plan need to be in line with the Northampton Sustainability Plan.

Review of CPC Project Evaluation Criteria

General Criteria

Jack Hornor read several emails sent to the CPC on the Project Evaluation Criteria.

Bob Reckman stated that the CPC is doing a great job on developing useful project criteria.

Lilly Lombard stated that she would like to separate “Save resources that would otherwise be threatened, or serve under served populations” into two separate sentences.

The members of the CPC agreed with Lilly Lombard to separate the sentence into two parts.

Lilly Lombard stated that the CPC Plan should reference MGL 44B.

Jack Hornor read an email from the housing partnership and explained the preferred changes to the existing language.

John Andrulis stated that the sixth bullet that stated, “demonstrates high cost/benefit value” should read “demonstrates high benefit to cost ratio.”

George Kohout stated that comments submitted by Fran Volkman are grammatical and attempt to prioritize the General Criteria Section.

Jack Hornor stated that he agreed with Fran Volkman on her prioritization of the General Criteria section.

George Kohout stated that he was under the impression that the CPC was not prioritizing the project evaluation criteria.

Don Bianchi stated that he agrees that the project evaluation criteria should not be prioritized, but it is a good idea to place the important sections first in the General Criteria section.

Don Bianchi stated that he would like to change, “demonstrates that other funding sources are not readily available” to “demonstrates that other sources not readily available or sufficient.”

George Kohout stated that the example section could be deleted and a statement guiding the applicant to the Community Preservation Coalition could replace those sections.

The CPC members decided to remove the example sections.

Jack Hornor stated that he would like to insert the Determining Project Eligibility Chart created by Stuart Saginor into the plan.

Open Space Criteria

No Comments

Historical preservation Criteria

Chris Kennedy stated that the historical commission will review the criteria at the end of the month and they have been looking at needs and will have better criteria by the September meeting.

George Kohout- stated that he would like the example, “provide ADA and MAAB accessibility at historic sites, such as elevators, ramps, restrooms, etc” to be moved to the criteria section.

Chris Kennedy stated that MGL Chapter 40C already covers the ADA and MAAB criteria in detail and it allows for some waivers for historical structures.

Community Housing Criteria

Don Bianchi stated that the criteria should place more emphasis on affordability.

Jack Hornor stated that he believes the first bullet, “creates or preserves community housing – both rental and home ownership, with a focus that matches community needs for households” addresses the affordability issue because the communities needs will change over time.

Don Bianchi stated that the CPC should give more consideration to an application that shows higher percentages of affordable units.

Jack Hornor stated the CPA law defines community housing as Area Wide Median Household Income up to 100%.

Don Bianchi stated that he believes one of the criteria should be percentage of units in a project below 80% Area Wide Household Median Income.

Don Bianchi stated that he would also like to see criteria that address the extent of very low income units and criteria that focus on # of affordable units, depth of affordability and length of affordability.

George Kohout asked if “gives priority to local residents, City employees, and employees of local businesses while ensuring diverse populations” is necessary criteria for housing.

Don Bianchi stated the he would prefer “gives priority to local residents, City employees, and employees of local businesses while being consistent with letter and spirit of fair housing.”

John Andrulis stated that he believes that, “gives priority to local residents, City employees, and employees of local businesses while ensuring diverse populations” addresses fair housing issues without having to be too specific.

Tom Parent stated that an applicant coming to CPC for a project for local priority will most likely have additional funding and will need to follow fair housing practices.

John- bullet intermingles affordable and market rate housing at levels that exceed state law and could this be in the diverse populations bullet

Don stated that he would work with Bruce on the Housing Criteria.

Recreation Criteria

Chris Kennedy stated that Craig Della Penna would like the CPC to use former railway instead of railway.

Additional discussion

Chris Kennedy asked if the draft minutes could be posted on the CPC website.

Jack Hornor explained that posting draft minutes is not a usual practice in government.

George Kohout asked if the CPC could or should support a citizen/s running for the open CPC seats.

The CPC decided that members should support citizens on their own and not as a committee.

Jack Hornor stated that he would like to invite members that win the CPC seats to sit in on the meetings in November and December.

Chris Kennedy agreed with Jack Hornor and stated that the Historical commission invites members not yet sworn in to sit in on their meetings.

Chris Kennedy motioned to approve funds for CPC letterhead and CPC nameplates.

Don seconded the motion

All members present voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM